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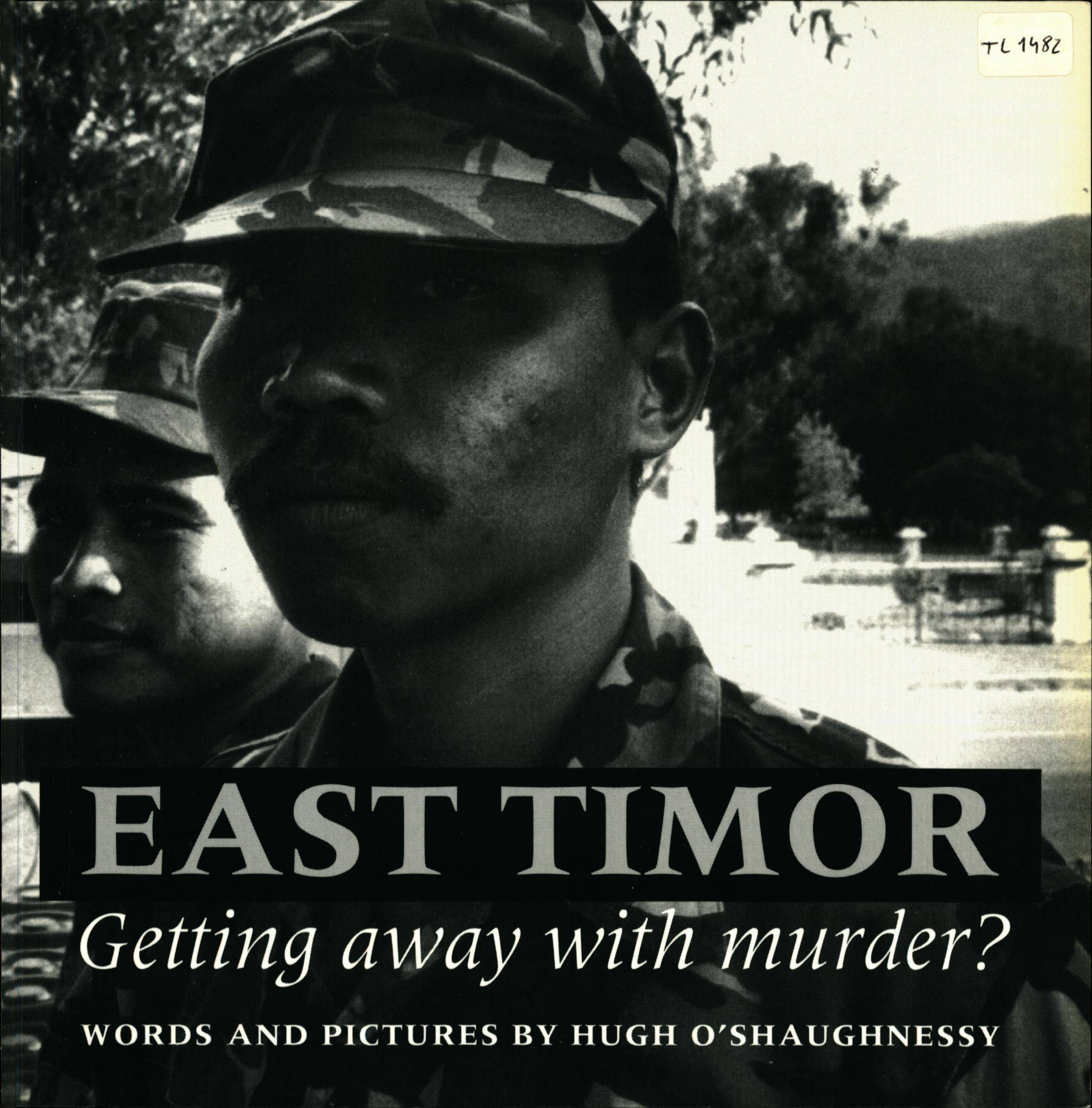

EAST TIMOR

Getting away with murder?

WORDS AND PICTURES BY HUGH O'SHAUGHNESSY

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THE BRITISH COALITION FOR EAST TIMOR

The British Coalition for East Timor was established in London following widespread public revulsion to the Santa Cruz massacre of 12 November 1991. Its immediate aim is to increase awareness of the grave injustice perpetrated on the people of East Timor by Indonesia, and to press for an early end to this illegal and brutal military occupation.

In addition to this, the Coalition seeks to provide some help to Timorese victims of human rights violations both inside and outside the territory. This aspect of the work is administered through the Timor Relief Fund.

Membership is drawn from a wide constituency and includes journalists, teachers, aid workers, human rights campaigners and other concerned members of the public.

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EAST TIMOR

Getting away with murder?

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Hugh O'Shaughnessy

Foreword

The story of East Timor, since the Indonesian invasion of 1975, has been one of murder, starvation, mutilation and imprisonment for the inhabitants. Some 200,000 of them have lost their lives. By their continued presence in East Timor the Indonesians make a mockery of the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly.

Nearly two decades of occupation of the Indonesian forces has not, despite continued massacre, broken the spirit of the East Timorese people.

This excellent book, written by Hugh O'Shaughnessy and illustrated by his photographs, is a poignant and stark reminder of the continuing agony of East Timor. Countless thousands have suffered and died during the Indonesian illegal occupation and their tragic plight receives little attention.

I, therefore, welcome the clear and timely message within these pages, which calls for an international effort to ensure that the rule of law is established and maintained in that country. That is the very least the people, who have endured so much, while the world averts its gaze, can ask.

Glenys Kinnock.

Glenys Kinnock

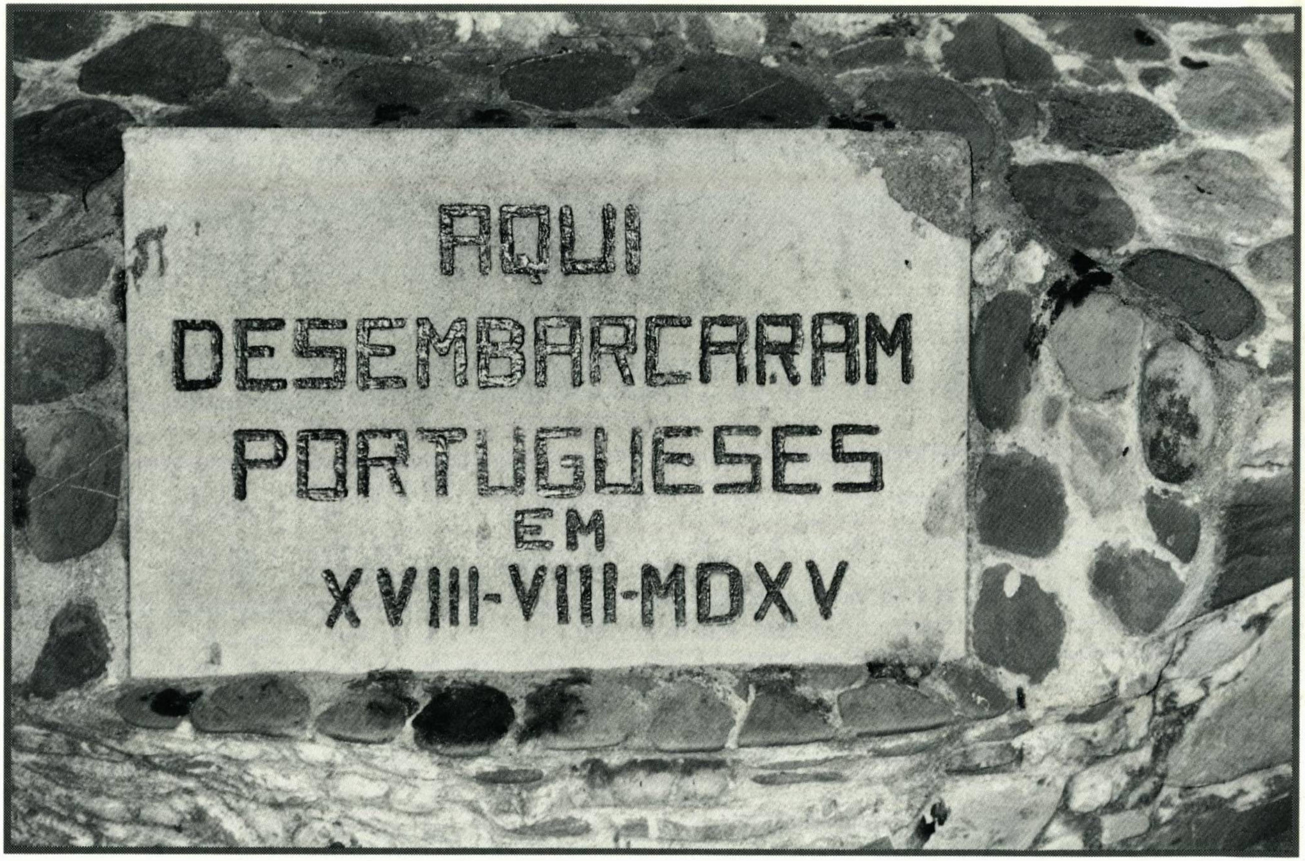
Author's Note

An accident of journalism brought me to East Timor, a free week between assignments for *The Observer* in 1991. I had never been to South East Asia and therefore knew it would be difficult to add anything to the work of journalists who had devoted years to the major topics of that region. Therefore before I set out I briefed myself in London on what I thought would be a small but manageable South East Asian story where my knowledge of Portuguese and the Portuguese world could be useful.

The suffering and bravery of the East Timorese and the hypocrisy of the Indonesian occupiers I experienced on the two visits I have made convince me that, despite its comparatively small size, East Timor is of worldwide importance for the principles which are at stake there. *The Observer* shares this conviction and has given me space to describe the developing situation.

Public opinion has meanwhile been powerfully moved by the film shot with outstanding bravery at the time of the Santa Cruz massacre in 1991 by the British film maker Max Stahl.

I hope that the pictures and the words in this book will help to convince governments, particularly those of Britain, the rest of the European Union, Australia and the United States that, for the sake of international law, they cannot allow General Suharto's regime and the Indonesian forces of occupation in East Timor to continue to get away with murder.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'Here Portuguese disembarked on 18 August 1515," says the stone. On a deserted beach at Oecussi it is watched over by an ancient cannon. Never more than a few hundred strong, the European colonisers left their mark.

Land, Sea and People

There is a biblical simplicity to the island. It is an enchanting place with its mountains and its forests and its calm sea. Amid the scenes of rural beauty the unwary stranger could imagine some utopian age when all was innocence and love. Poor shepherds tend their flocks; fishermen cast their nets for the catches, which they sell by the water's edge; women and children work in the fields; old women help to bring in the harvest. It is a difficult place, too lush during the rains but often left scorched and brown by the tropical sun. The rivers are either fierce torrents to be crossed at one's peril or are empty watercourses.

In some places rice grows easily and the water buffalo can sink into the dark mud to refresh themselves when their work is over. In the hills good coffee grows. And wasn't the island a great and fabled source of the sandalwood that was prized by the ancients and spoken of by the prophets?

Appearances can mislead. Ancient Timor was never more a land of peace than the war-ravaged Israel of the Bible was. The first Timorese lived in no utopia in the old days, before the Portuguese arrived, before the Indonesians invaded.

The first inhabitants arrived from the islands of the east, with others coming in from the continent of Asia till the place was a babel of thirty different languages, their speakers divided into petty kingdoms, for ever at war with one another.

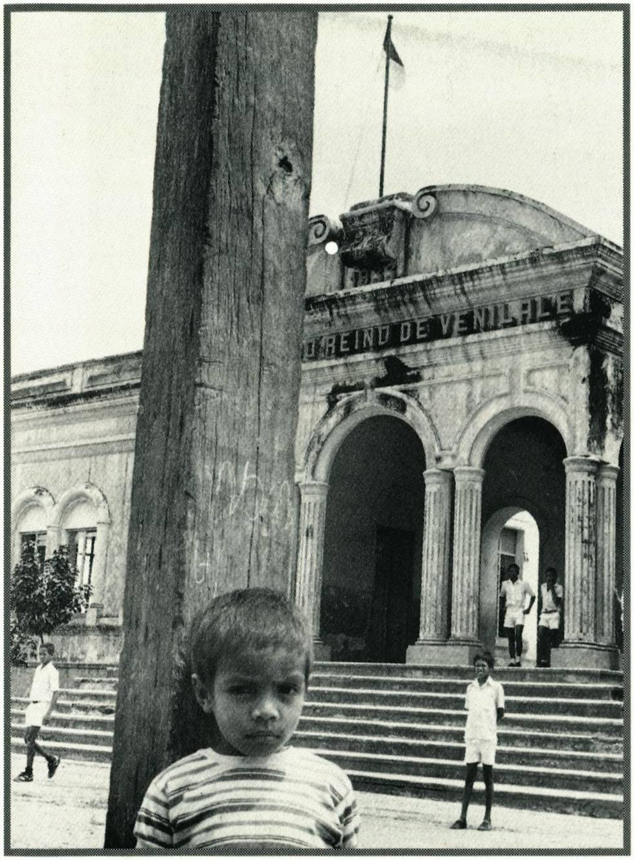
For all their divisions the East Timorese were and remained themselves, little concerned, it seems, with what was going on in the islands around them. Perhaps they were too busy

New Indonesian schools and a university college in Dili have not persuaded young people to accept the occupation.

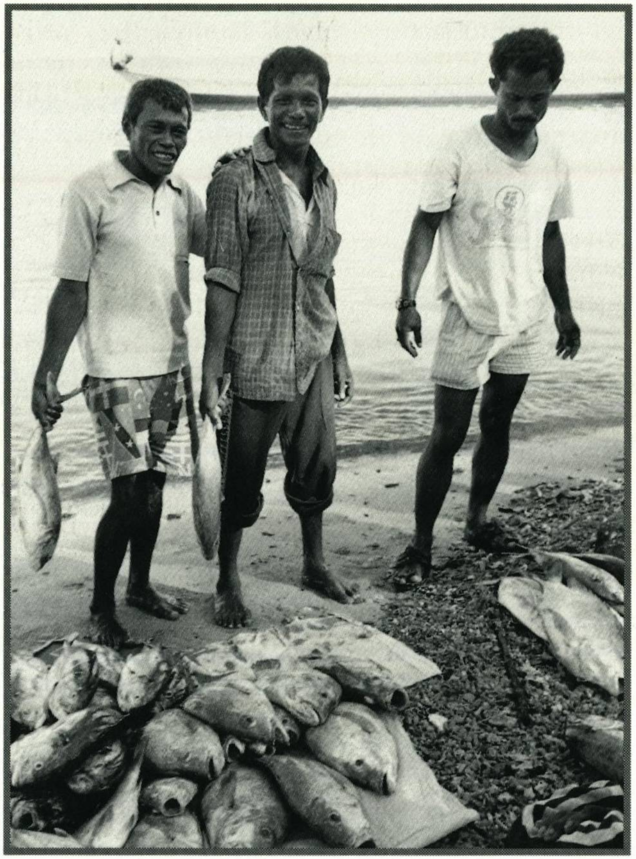
fighting among themselves. Though they must have arrived by sea, they lost interest in it, seldom venturing very far from their own shores. They seemed content to form an attachment to their land. No coloniser or invader has been able to break it. The Portuguese arrived on 18 August 1515, bringing Christianity, but they never changed the East Timorese's love for their country. Since their invasion in 1975 the Indonesians have been trying to transform Timor and its people. There is no indication that they will succeed.

Their latest leader, Xanana Gusmão, head of a guerrilla resistance that had confronted the Indonesian occupation forces, was captured by the occupation forces on 20 November 1992. Six months later he was sentenced to life imprisonment after a farcical trial and has been exiled to Indonesia.

The resistance continues.

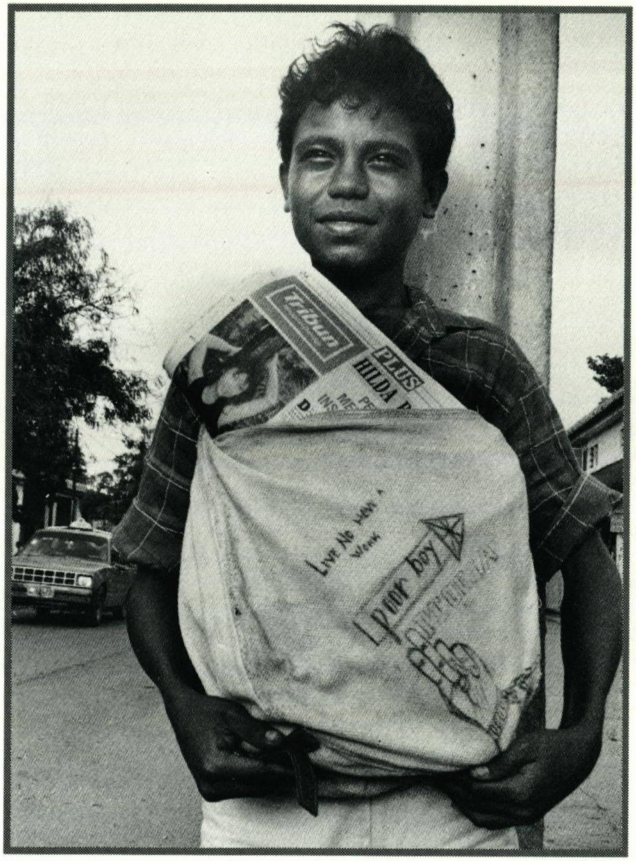


An Indonesian flag flies over the government house that the Portuguese built for the Kingdom of Venilale.



Selling the morning's catch, Dili.

The Indonesian generals, who profit from most of Timor's natural wealth, can't trade in the fish. It's too perishable to yield easy profits.


Tribun
PLUS
HILDA
poor boy

Dili: Timorese boy, Indonesian journalism.

Occupiers

The Indonesian army of occupation is everywhere in East Timor. The soldiers who lounge round the city are the successors of the men who erupted into East Timor at the end of 1975.

They take the places of those first Indonesian soldiers who murdered the witnesses of their atrocities. Greg Shackleton, the 29-year-old television reporter and Tony Stewart the 21-year-old sound recordist, from HSV7 in Melbourne, both Australians; their 27-year-old New Zealand cameraman Gary Cunningham; Brian Peters, 29, and Malcolm Rennie, 28, both British, working for the Nine Network in the same city were shot calmly and in cold blood early in the morning of 16 October 1975 at Balibo on the border with Indonesia as they tried to cover the fighting. They had painted an Australian flag on the house where they were. As the invaders attacked them the journalists put their hands in the air and screamed "Australians, Australians".

At least the Indonesians were honest about their crime. Radio Kupang, a government station in West Timor, announced, "We killed the Australian communist journalists and we will kill any others who come along". They were true to their word. A sixth journalist, Roger East, also an Australian, was murdered on the morning of 8 December by soldiers of the 501 Battalion of the Javanese Brawijawa Division. He was shot on the wharf in Dili, his hands bound with wire, facing his murderers, shouting "I am not Fretilin. I am an Australian."

The wharf was a favourite place for the invading forces to murder the East Timorese. That same December those first Indonesian

KASAN
TNI-AD
TNI-AD

Military masters, befriended by the United States, armed and trained by Britain and Australia.

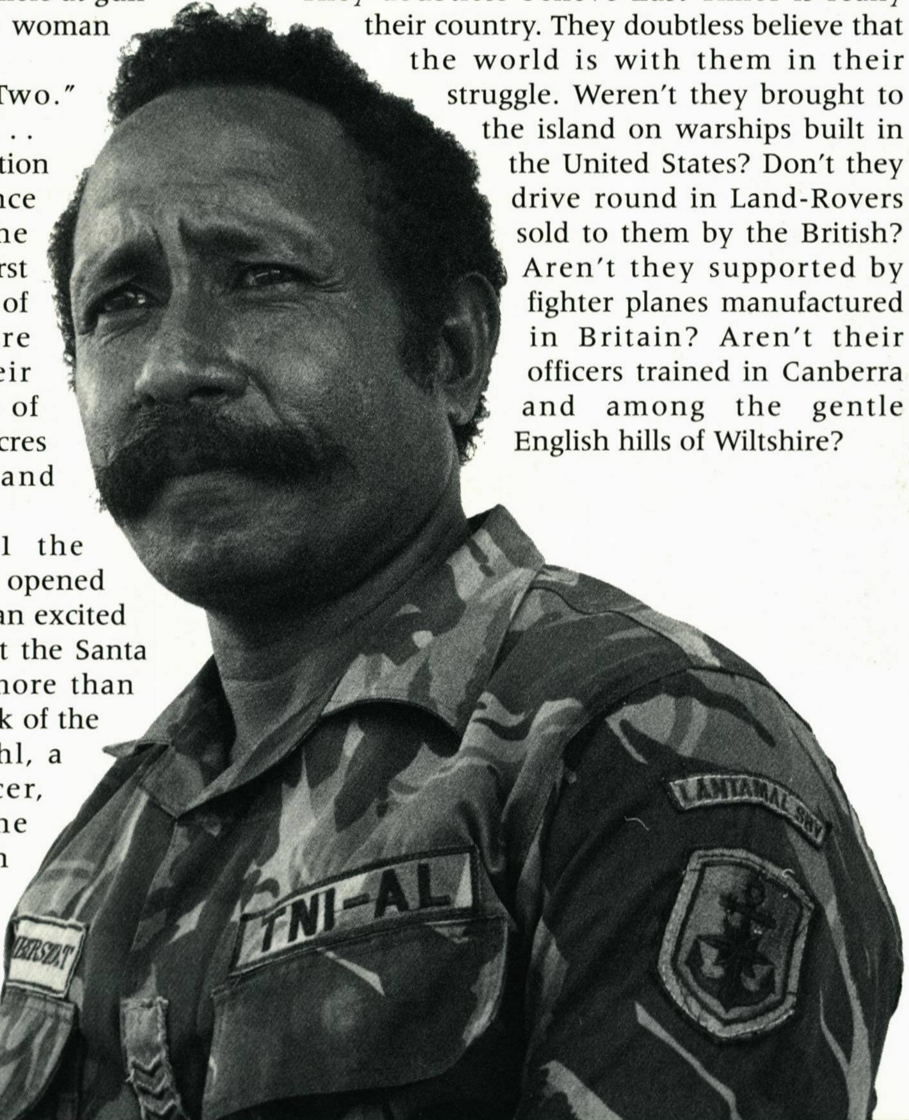
soldiers seized twenty East Timorese women, pulled their babies out of their arms and led them to the edge of the jetty. When the troops got them to the water's edge they shot them one by one, forcing the onlookers at gun point to count aloud as each woman toppled dead into the sea.

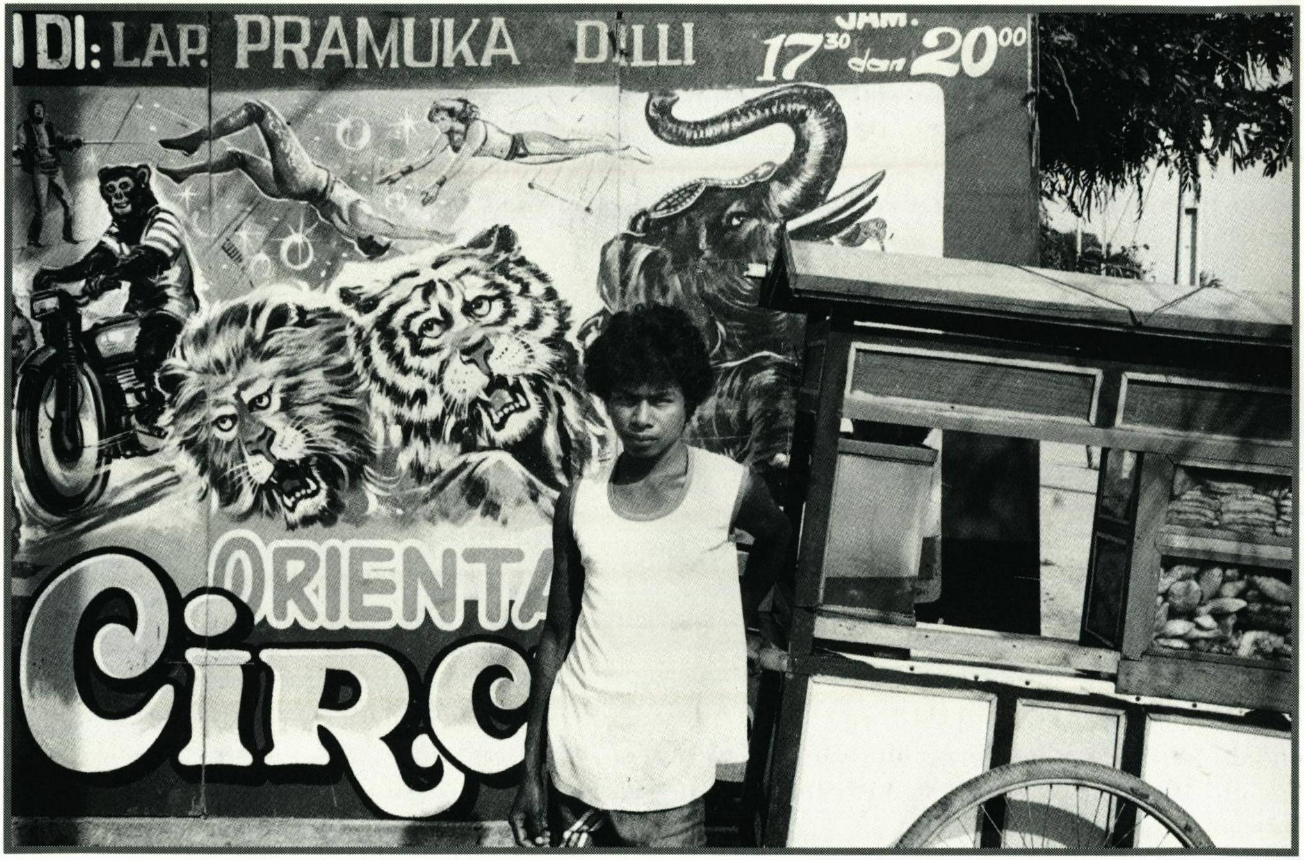
Bang. "One." Bang. "Two." Bang. "Three." Bang. "Four." . . .

The attitude of the occupation forces has changed little since they first invaded. Over the years since the occupation first began hundreds of thousands of Timorese, whose names are now known only to their families, have died, victims of unrecorded battles and massacres or of hunger, disease and exposure.

On 12 November 1991 the Indonesian occupying forces opened fire on mourners conducting an excited but peaceful demonstration at the Santa Cruz cemetery and killed more than 250 of them. It was the ill luck of the Indonesians that Max Stahl, a British television producer, courageously filmed the massacre and survived with the film, which was shown round the world.

On the road to Ermera today soldiers on an Indonesian army truck deliver supplies to the military detachments who guard the road. They laugh and wave to me in the best of spirits. They doubtless believe East Timor is really their country. They doubtless believe that the world is with them in their struggle. Weren't they brought to the island on warships built in the United States? Don't they drive round in Land-Rovers sold to them by the British? Aren't they supported by fighter planes manufactured in Britain? Aren't their officers trained in Canberra and among the gentle English hills of Wiltshire?




DI: LAP. PRAMUKA DILLI
JAM.
17³⁰ dan 20⁰⁰
ORIENTA
CIRC

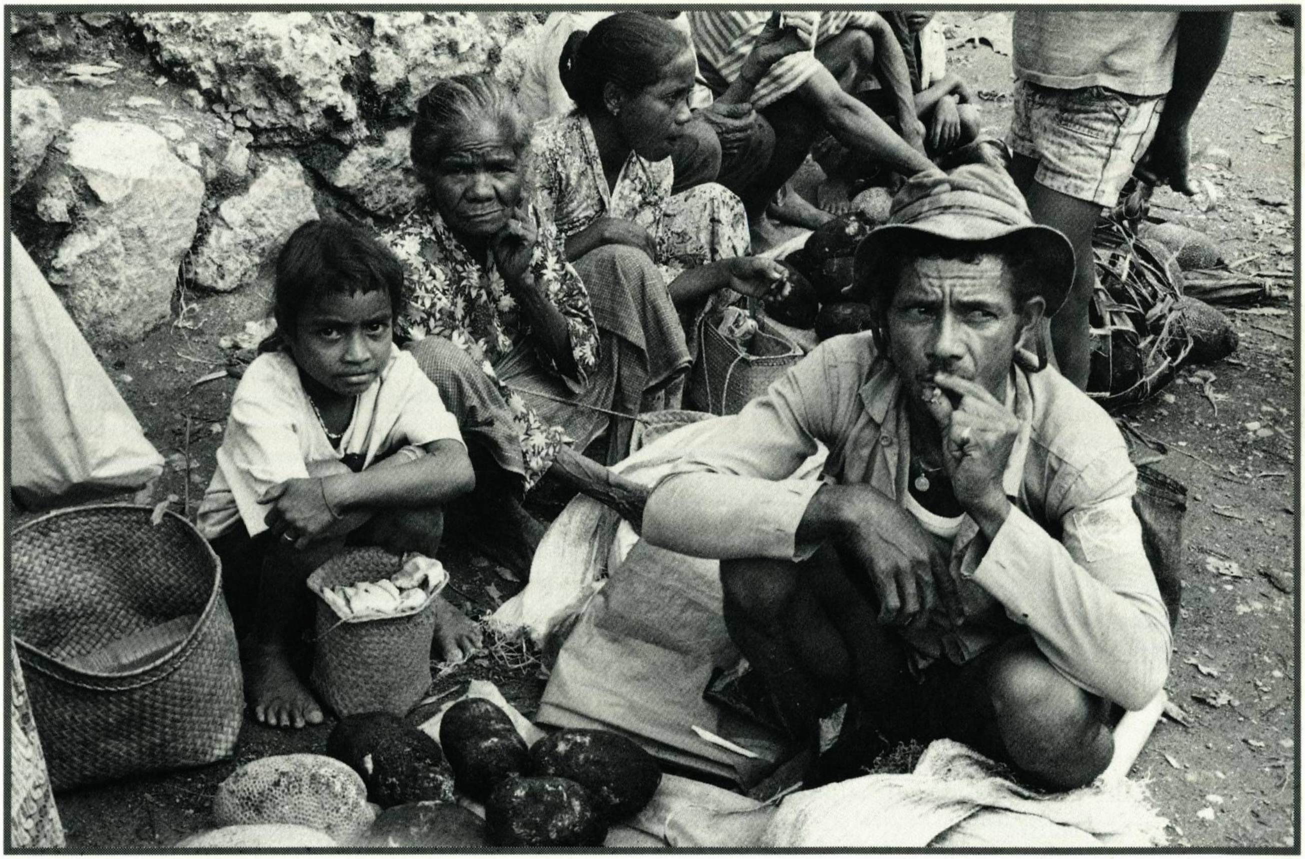
The circus comes to a frightened Dili.

Towns

It is evening and half-a-dozen Javanese army officers with short haircuts are moodily committing karaoke in the restaurant of the Nova Resende Inn. They are accompanying videos of the hits of the fifties. The Nova Resende is the best hotel in the capital of East Timor and it looks out onto the governor's palace. Decked out with coloured lights and blessed with a friendly staff, the inn offers de luxe rooms at £12 a night, inclusive of cold water and hot breakfast. The officers are probably from the unit just around the corner. But then there seems to be an army unit around every corner in this unhappy occupied city of 100,000 people. Armed soldiers, some in battle gear, patrol the central avenues lined by the low buildings the Portuguese built during the Salazar dictatorship, and they fan out into the dusty shanties that reach into the surrounding hills.

On the quiet waterfront where rusty coasters tie up, the city's only cinema is showing the latest in an interminable series of Chinese kung-fu films. Earlier in the evening a van with loudspeaker went round touting for custom, but I was not tempted. Nightlife in Dili amounts to little more than this. If, that is, you except the patient quiet men who, in the light of a candle or a hurricane lamp, sell the occasional boiled sweet to the rare nocturnal pedestrian. The candle of one stall picks out a typed notice glued to the door of the Bank Summa. It tells of *likwidasi* and how depositors can apply to get some of their money back.

I buy a tube of gumdrops from the patient man. "Thirty escudos," he says. Though the Portuguese quit the territory eighteen years ago and Portuguese is not taught in the schools the occupying forces have set up, old habits die hard. To the East Timorese ten units of the



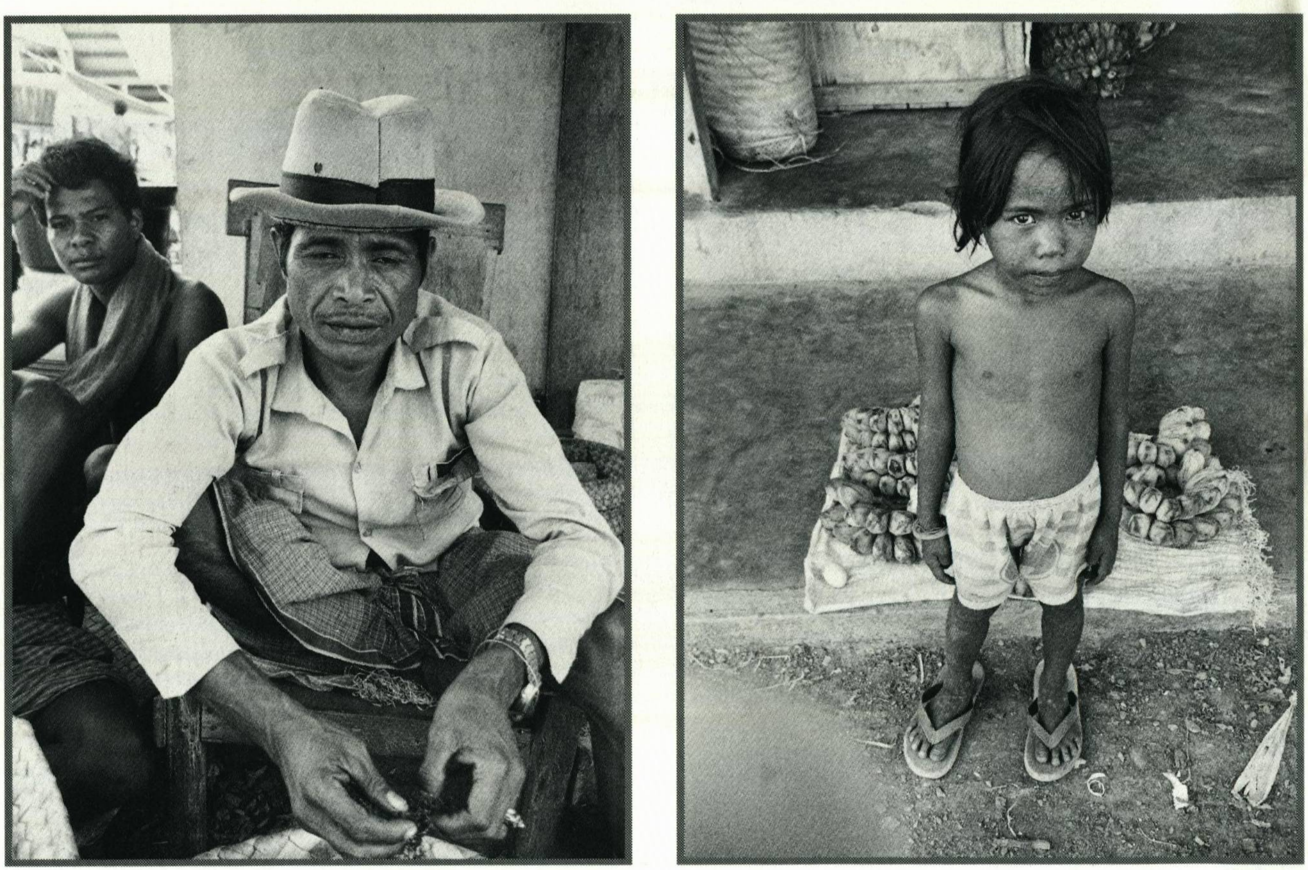
Baucau market, a stone's throw from the Hotel Flamboyant where the occupying forces torture their captives.

Indonesian currency, the rupiah, will for ever be an escudo, the currency of Portugal. The most active place in town this evening seems to be the telephone office.

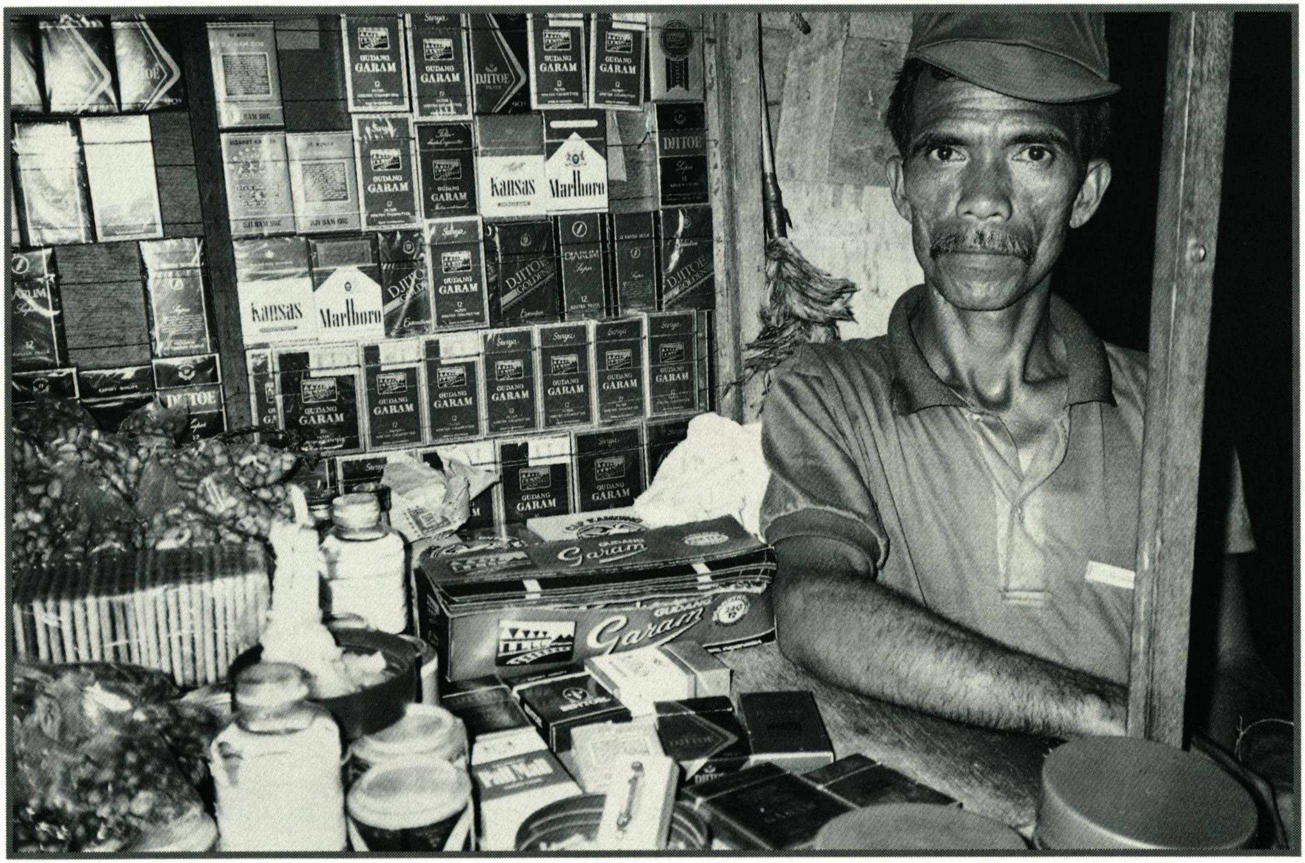
Several people, including a soldier in uniform and a grave bespectacled young man in a white Islamic skull cap - obviously an immigrant - are waiting to use the long-distance telephone to keep in touch with loved ones in Java and Sumatra. The nightlife of Dili, such as it is, illustrates how this city has been pulled apart since the Indonesian occupation. Neither the invasion nor the purported annexation have been recognised as legitimate by the UN or the East Timorese themselves. The Indonesian army, whose representatives desport themselves in the Nova Resende, controls Dili. It is there because Jakarta needs to keep down those who after eighteen years still oppose the Indonesian presence. Under the army's aegis, swarms of settlers, most of them Muslims in a predominantly Christian community, have come in to take over the leading positions in the city.

Tens of thousands have been attracted by the facilities the Indonesian government has offered them in the form of land and credit. Many have brought sharp business practice to this sleepy town, the kind of capitalism which, when too venturesome, begets bank failure. These are the sort of people who were queuing at the telephone office. But at the bottom of the social heap in their own land are the East Timorese, steadily losing control of their country to the foreigners.

Like the cigarette sellers they are quiet and patient. They have little option. A few blocks away from the Nova Resende Inn is the Santa Cruz Cemetery. There on 12 November 1991 the East Timorese staged a peaceful demonstration against the occupiers and the Indonesian troops opened fire. After the firing had stopped they needed fourteen lorries to cart away the corpses.



Dili market: Indonesian immigrants mix with Timorese.



Dili by night: Cigarettes for sale.

Bishop Belo, target for the occupiers.

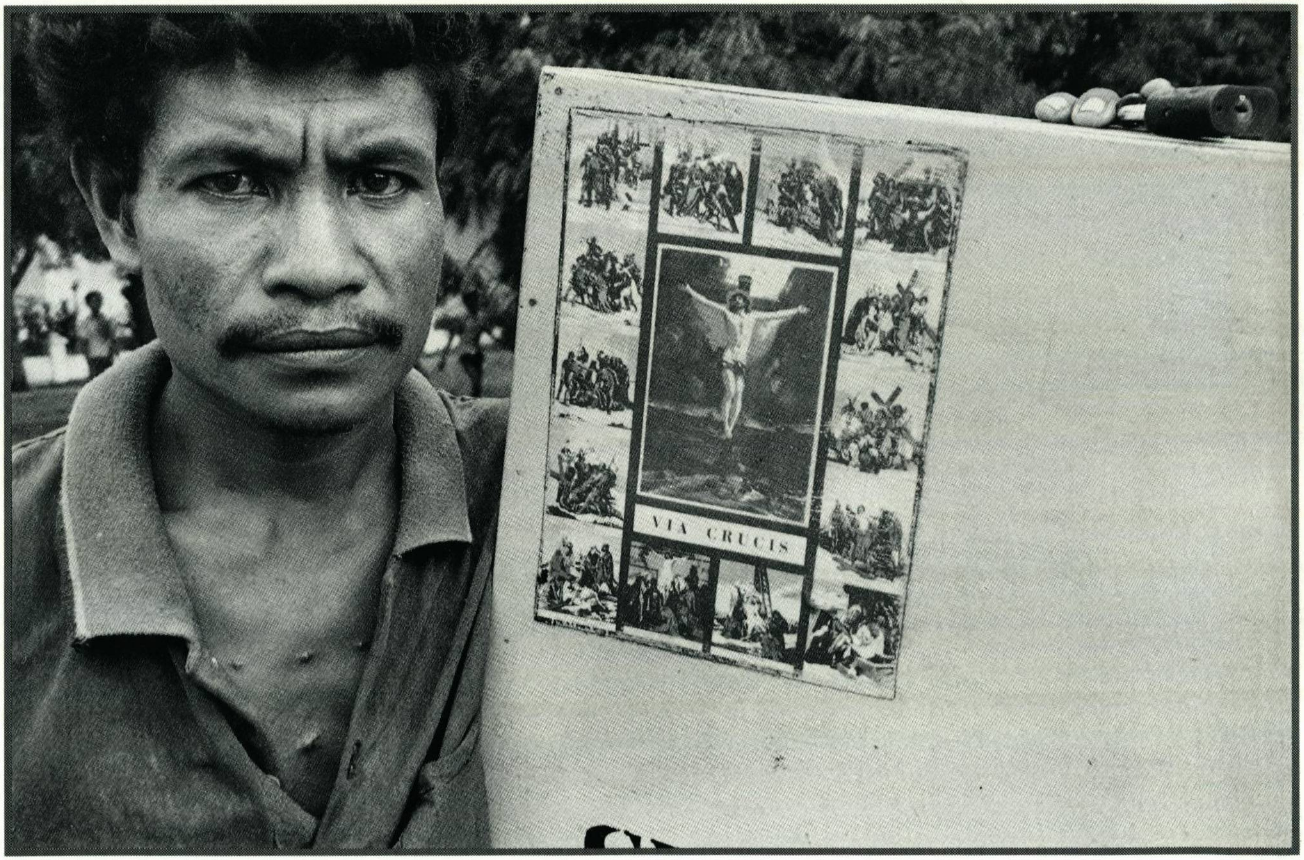
The Sign of the Cross

Filipe Ximenes Belo is the popular and long-suffering bishop of Dili. As he leaves mass every Sunday his popularity is attested to by the way in which he is mobbed by the faithful. The East Timorese see in him a bulwark against the Muslim invader. He is long suffering because he has to put up with the verbal and diplomatic attacks of the Indonesians without always receiving the backing he deserves. Catholics are a small but influential minority in Indonesia and their voice often seems stronger than that of the small East Timorese community which has been Christian for centuries. Despite this and because of the witness borne by such as Belo, Christianity in Timor is stronger than it has ever been. You don't have to walk very far in Dili to find a shop which sells rosaries or plaster statues of the Sacred Heart.

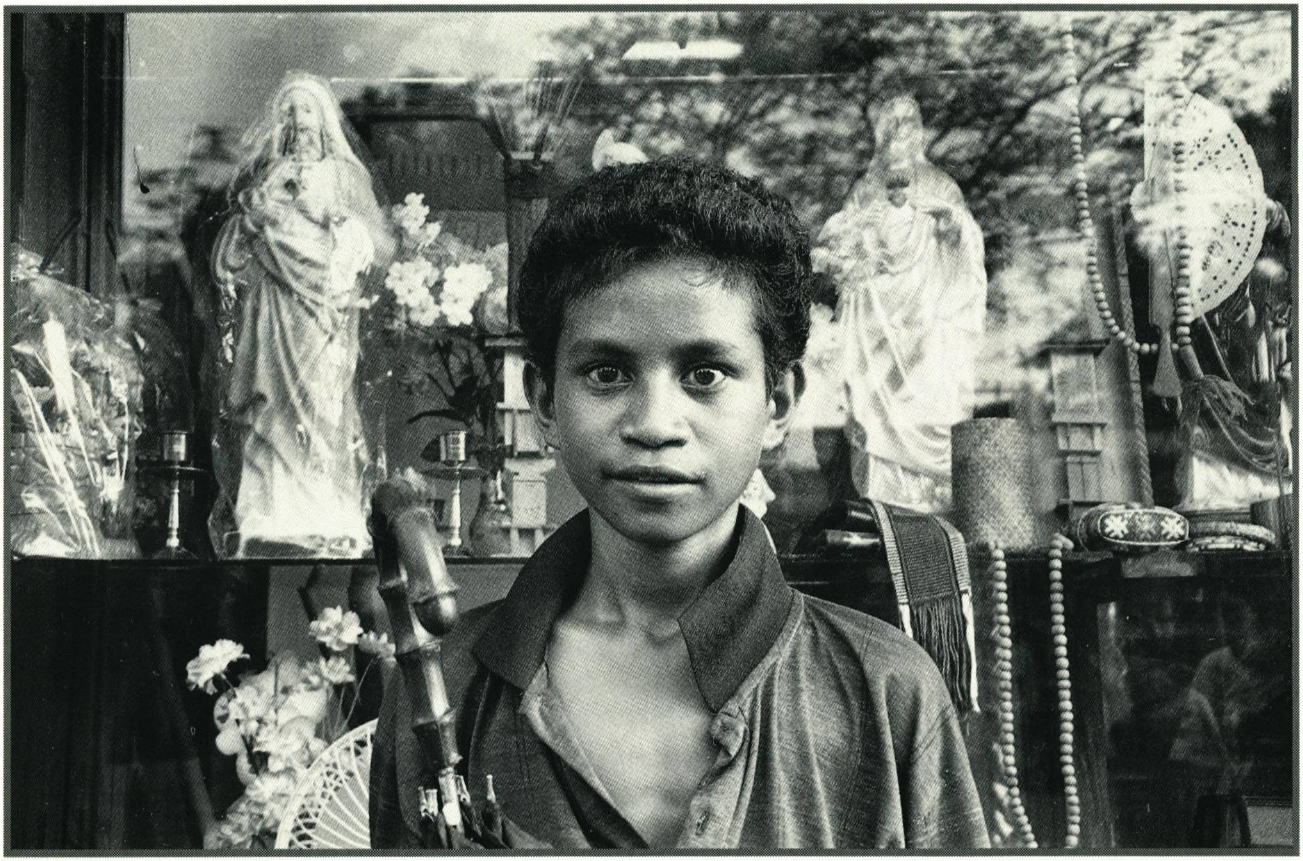
The road to Ermera rises as you leave Dili and soon you are in cool wooded hills where the coffee grows. There is nowhere better to dry the bean than the firm warm surface of the road where an old woman has spread out her crop.

The land around Ermera, as the presence of the Indonesian soldiers in 1993 proves, has always been a difficult area for the occupiers. East Timorese military resistance has been active here since the occupation started.

I arrive in the town centre as Sunday mass is coming to an end. The little church the Portuguese built is much too small to accommodate the crowds who flock round the altar. Mass is in the open air, the men on the right, the women, their turquoise shawls covering their heads, on the left. At communion time a dozen nuns and ministers

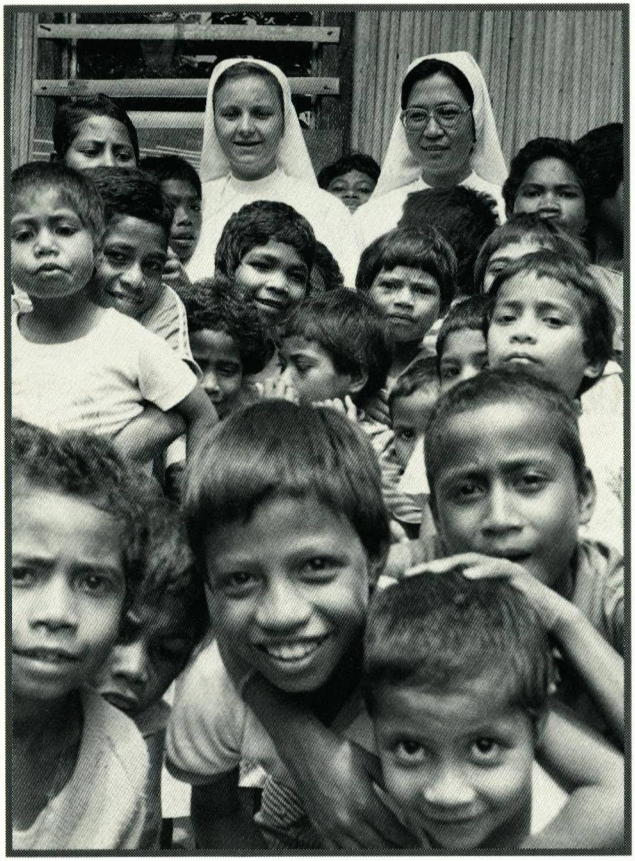


Street vendor in Dili: Timorese calvary.



The statue shop, Dili.

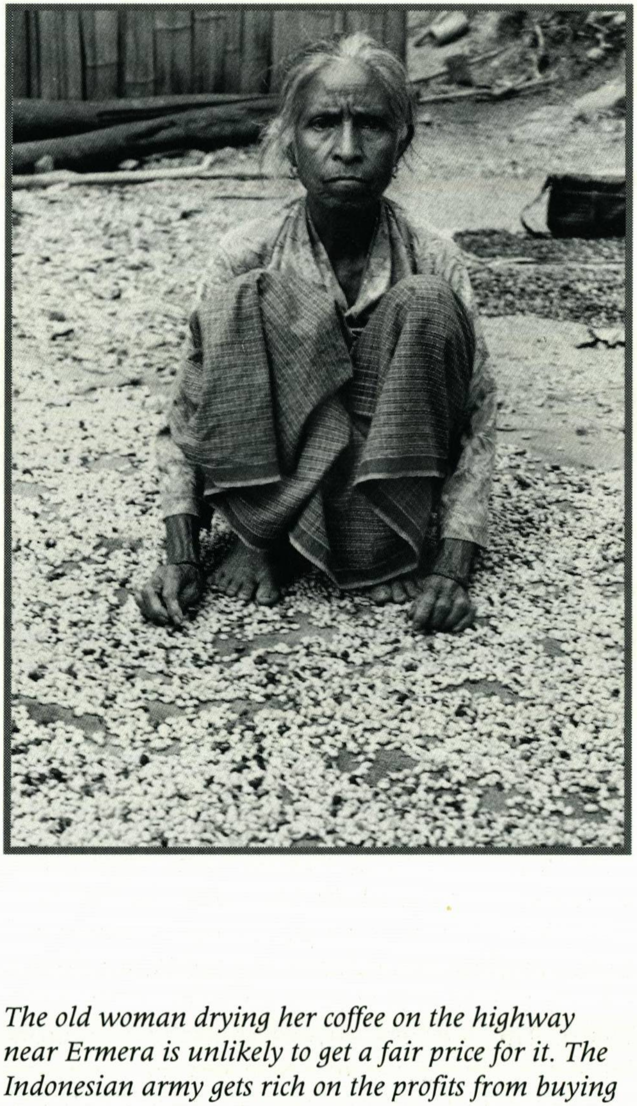
Convent courtyard in Oecussi.



Orphans and their sisters, Venilale.

are on hand to give the hosts out to the huge press of people.

Afterwards I walk through the crowded market looking at the fresh produce, noting the small, apparently deserted Muslim prayer house. In the thick of the crowd there is a hand on my left arm and a soft voice says in good English, "Please come with me". I look round and see a young Javanese police corporal in uniform. He escorts me a hundred metres to the veranda of the police station where, surrounded by half-a-dozen plain-clothes agents and with hundreds of townspeople looking on, he begins a thorough examination of my passport and a short interrogation: my name, the address of my hotel, my trade, my religion. Religion is clearly a matter of some importance for the corporal.



The old woman drying her coffee on the highway near Ermera is unlikely to get a fair price for it. The Indonesian army gets rich on the profits from buying Timor's produce on the cheap.

Intruders

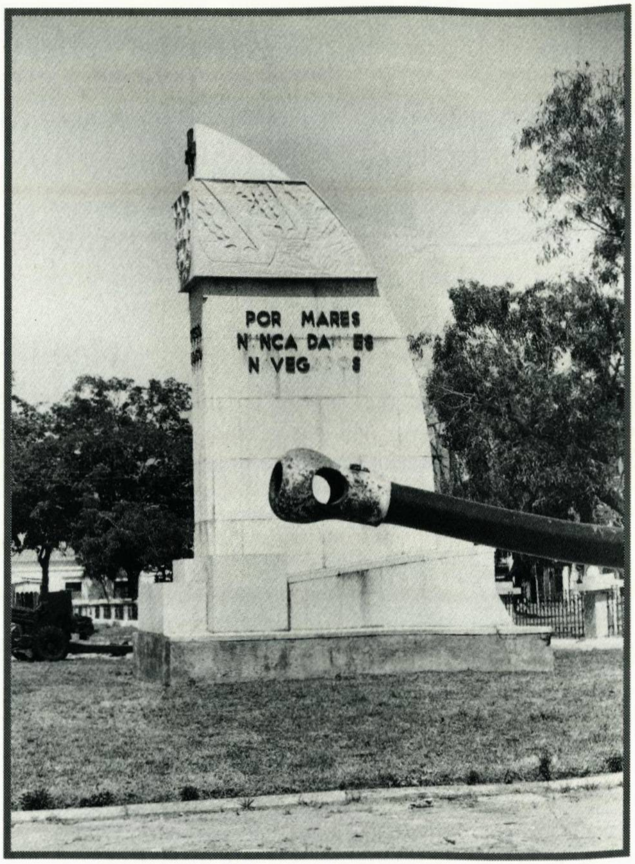
Bishop Belo sits quietly on the veranda of his house across the road from the beach in Dili. "Every plane and boat that arrives brings more of them," he tells me. "In ten years time Dili will cease to be a Timorese town if things go on as they are."

The most dangerous threat to the future of the East Timorese as a people does not come from the presence of the Indonesian occupation forces or their weapons. Their national identity is much more at risk from the tens of thousands of Indonesian civilians who have been encouraged by General Suharto to settle in the country. The process is part of a long-term Indonesian strategy called *transmigrasi* under which people from the heavily populated island of Java are offered land and credit if they settle in hundreds on the less populated and less well developed islands which make up the country.

At its simplest and most defensible the strategy has the effect of relieving population pressure where it is strongest and giving increased opportunity and wider horizons to Javanese. They, by moving, strengthen the sometimes tenuous links between the capital, Jakarta, and the outer parts of what, since the departure of the Dutch in 1949, has been a Javanese empire.

It threatens their language. Bahasa Indonesia, which few Timorese want to speak, has now become the "official" language. Few of the Indonesians speak Tetum, the most common language of the Timorese.

It threatens their religion. The intruders are in the majority Muslims while the Timorese are mainly Catholic. Money and favour is shown to Islam. The modern airport that the occupiers have built in Dili contains a prayer room for Muslims yet no chapel for the Catholic majority. The Timorese Catholic clergy are



looked on with distrust by the Indonesians. Jakarta encourages the appointment of Indonesian Catholics to positions of responsibility in the Timorese church and, sad to say, some Indonesian Catholics accept those positions.

It threatens their culture. Tetum and Portuguese are being squeezed out of the school curricula and Indonesian culture is poured in on every tightly censored radio and television programme.

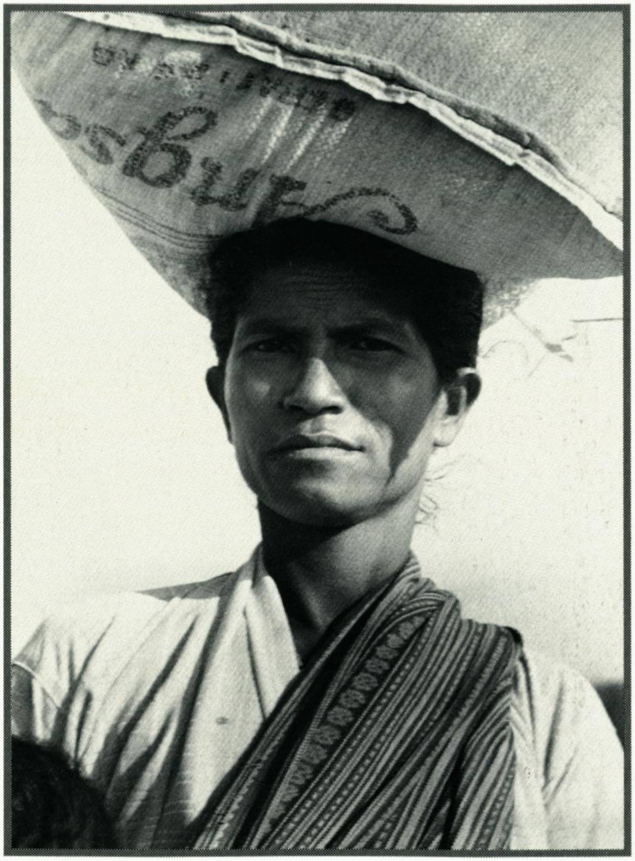
It threatens their rights to their own land. The foreigners flock in and take over Timorese fields, plantations and quarries.

It threatens their economic future. In the towns, the Indonesians are taking over more and more businesses. Dili is where the foreign immigration is most concentrated and noticeable. The Javanese, being lighter skinned and having smoother hair than the Timorese, are everywhere recognisable on the streets and in the shops, offices and banks of Dili. Despite the terrible sacrifices the Timorese underwent in the Second World War to protect Australian

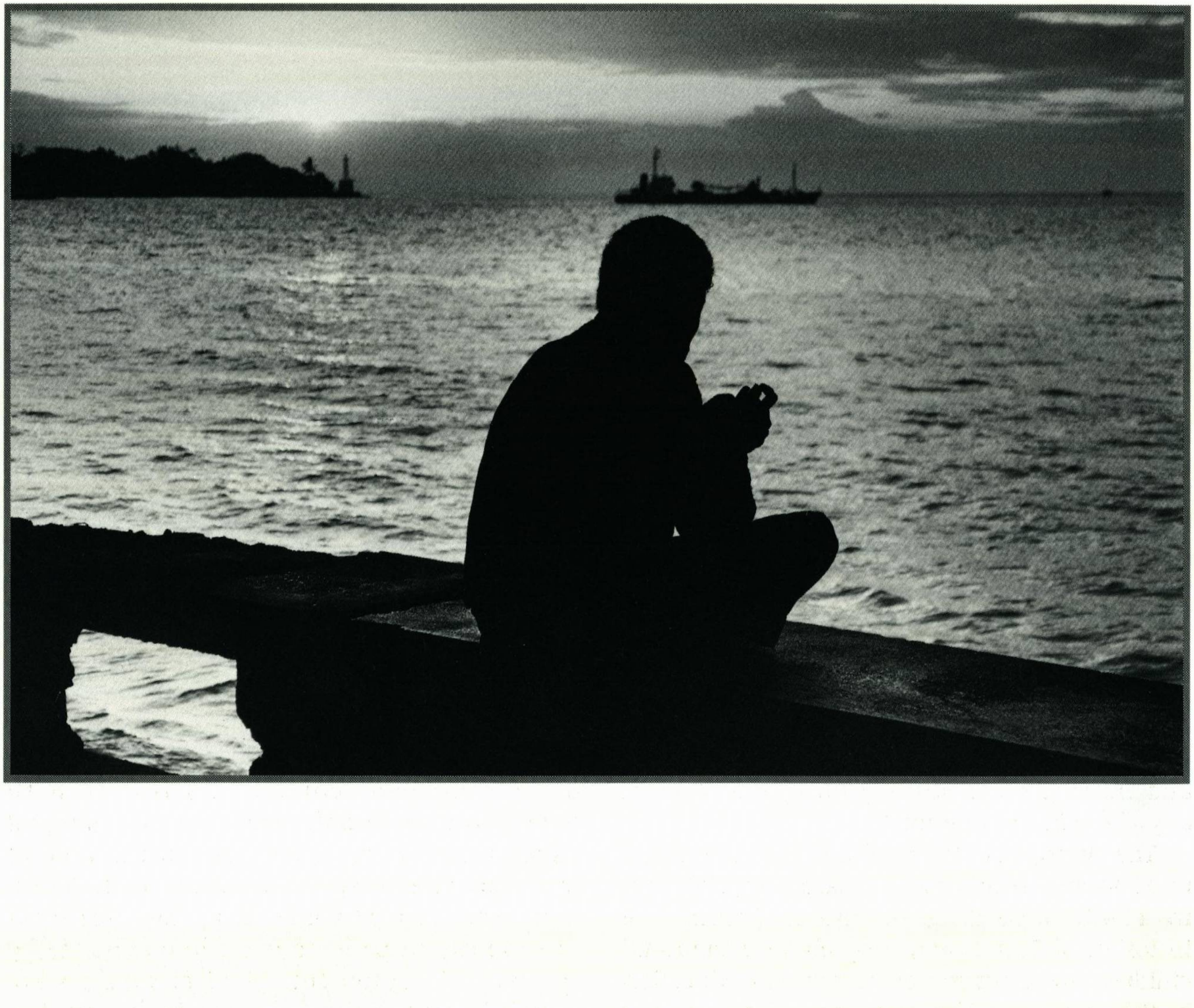
"Por mares nunca dantes navegados [Through seas no man had ever sailed]." Guarded by guns from the Second World War, the gap-toothed monument to Portuguese voyages of discovery, bearing words from Camoens' epic poem The Lusiads *still stands in Dili.*

and other Allied troops from the Japanese, the regime of General Suharto has even tempted the Australian government to sign a diplomatic deal. In it, Canberra purports to recognise Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor and the Indonesians purport to allow Australian oil companies to join with the Indonesians in pillaging East Timor's oil.

Nevertheless, somehow Timorese culture does survive, strengthened not weakened by the horrors of the nearly two decades of Indonesian occupation. The East Timorese have not been turned into Indonesians despite all the valueless decrees from Jakarta. The directors of the oil companies which are about to start stealing Timorese oil would do well to ponder on that.



The enclave of Oecussi, once the capital of Timor, is cut off from East Timor proper but its inhabitants feel no less opposed than any other Timorese to the Indonesian occupation.



Night over Dili, waiting for a dawn.

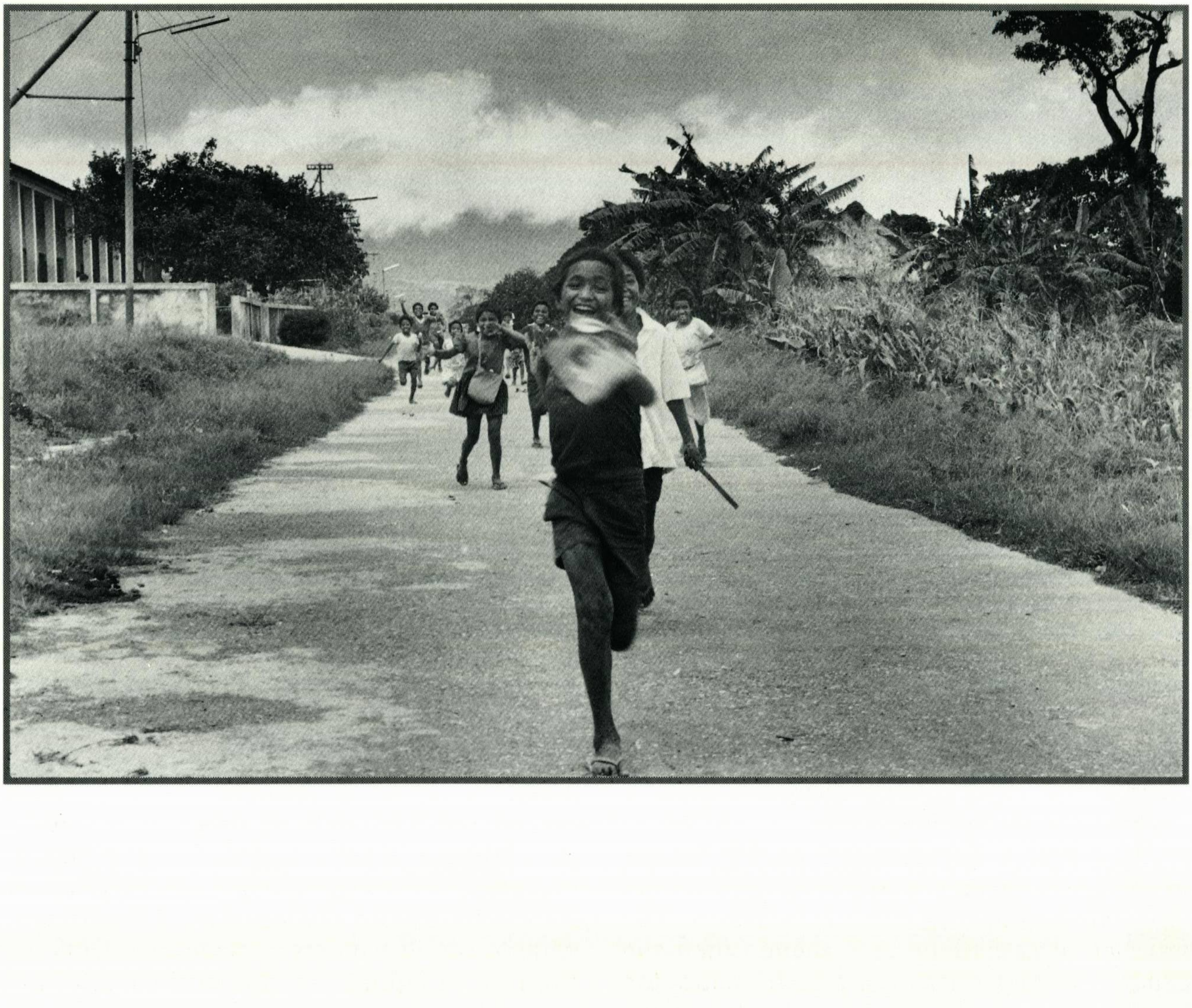
Illness

It does no good to romanticise the period when East Timor was under Portuguese rule. Lisbon provided little or nothing for her colonial subjects. Lord Wallace, a British peer who visited the country in the middle of the nineteenth century, commented: "The Portuguese government in Timor is a most miserable one. Nobody seems to care the least about the improvement of the country . . . after three hundred years of occupation there has not been a mile of road made beyond the town, and there is not a solitary European resident anywhere in the interior."

The Portuguese founded a school at Oecussi in 1734 and another at Manatuto in 1747 but in 1940, according to James Dunn, the historian of East Timor, only about a thousand children were getting even primary education in the colony. Health care varied between the primitive and the non-existent.

Though the Indonesians have introduced education in Bahasa Indonesia as a way of trying to promote the absorbtion of East Timor into their country, the state of health of the population has not improved since colonial days.

Helga Bürgel, a German doctor, visited and worked in East Timor in 1991. She visited the hospital at Baucau. She wrote: "Hygiene is abysmal, the wash-room, if existent, is often dirty, bedsteads corroded. Patients with tuberculosis were only separated from surgical patients by a curtain, although at the time of my visit the hospital was not full. I saw incorrectly applied plaster casts. The treatment of seriously ill patients is made impossible by the lack of equipment. Medical supplies are only delivered every three months, always less



than required. Infusions are in short supply and cannot be produced locally. The surgical emergency room was very dirty."

Some of the medical facilities in East Timor are better maintained than those at Baucau but the Indonesian presence has not improved the health of the East Timorese. As Xanana recalls in his message from prison in Indonesia, shortly after the occupation "famine and disease reduced the population to skin and bones".

The war that the Indonesians brought with them has killed and maimed many more Timorese than died under years of Portuguese neglect.

Brief Chronology

1550s onwards		Portuguese colonisation of East Timor.
1974	25 April	Caetano regime in Portugal overthrown.
1974		East Timorese political parties form: UDT, Fretilin, Apodeti.
1975	20 January	Coalition formed between Fretilin and UDT.
	6 June	Indonesian troops invade Oecussi.
	11 August	UDT launches coup to curb Fretilin.
	24 September	UDT forces withdraw to West Timor. Fretilin takes charge.
	28 November	Fretilin declares East Timor an independent state.
	7 December	Indonesian forces invade East Timor.
	22 December	UN Security Council calls on Indonesia to withdraw its armed forces from East Timor.
1976		Indonesian relief workers visiting East Timor report 100,000 people have been killed since the invasion.
1978		Fretilin leader, Nicolau Lobato, shot dead by Indonesian troops.
1979		International Red Cross (banned from East Timor from 1975 – 1979) concludes "tens of thousands of people displaced by military operations are facing starvation".
1980		East Timor designated official transmigration area.
1981		"Fence of Legs" military operation involves massive recruitment of civilians.
1982	16 May	Pope confirms that the Vatican does not accept the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.
1985	18 August	Bob Hawke, Prime Minister of Australia, recognises Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.

1986	January	Eight of East Timor's thirteen districts open to outside visitors.
	6 February	Bishop Belo writes to UN Secretary General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, calling upon the UN to hold a referendum on the future of the territory.
	October	Pope John Paul II visits East Timor.
1991	12 November	Santa Cruz massacre: many hundreds of East Timorese gunned down in cold blood in Santa Cruz Cemetery, Dili. The Indonesian government called to account by world community.
1992		Xanana Gusmão, leader of the East Timorese resistance, is captured in Dili.
1993		Xanana is sentenced to life imprisonment, later commuted to twenty years. Indonesia is condemned in a resolution passed at the UN Commission on Human Rights.

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Available from CIIR, Unit 3, Canonbury Yard, 190A New North Road, London N1 7BJ.

Tapol Bulletin. Bimonthly newsletter of the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign. Subscriptions £14 per year for individuals, £20 for institutions.
Available from Tapol, 111 Northwood Road, Thornton Heath, Croydon, Surrey CR4 8HW.

ORGANISATIONS

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Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT).
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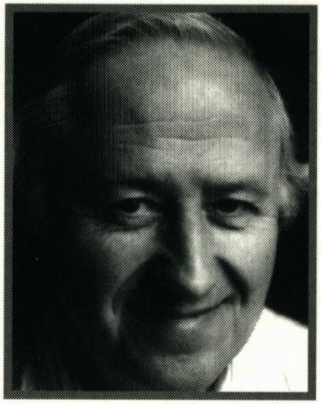
Hugh O'Shaughnessy, 59, has been the Latin America Correspondent of *The Observer* since the late 1960s. His work has brought him two British Press Awards and awards from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York and the University of Arkansas.

His books on Latin America and the Caribbean have been published in London, New York, Tokyo and Buenos Aires and his photographs have appeared in *The Observer*, *The Irish Times*, and *Die Welt*.

He is a regular contributor to BBC2's *Assignment* series and to BBC Radio 4's *From Our Own Correspondent*.

He was a member of the first committee of Amnesty International and the committees of the Latin America Bureau, which he helped to found in 1977, of the Catholic Institute for International Relations and of Christian Aid.

He is married with three children and two grandchildren.



Jane Bown

British Coalition for East Timor